

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A composite footwear insole comprising ~~having~~ a front portion ~~(2)~~ for interacting with the user's foot at the metatarsal region and at least partly at the plantar arch, and a rear portion ~~(3)~~ for interacting with the foot over the heel region, ~~characterized in that~~ said rear portion having ~~(3)~~ ~~has~~ at least one layer ~~(4)~~ of gel material whose plan size is substantially equal to that of said rear portion ~~(3)~~ and smaller than the plan size of the entire insole to uniformly support the heel and absorb stresses acting thereon, said gel layer ~~(4)~~ having an upper surface ~~(5)~~ for interacting with the heel that has no discontinuities to further increase comfort, wherein said gel layer is made of one piece and said upper surface is visible from the outside.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said rear portion ~~(3)~~ is wholly made of gel material.

4. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said rear portion ~~(3)~~ comprises a support base ~~(7)~~ made of a semi-rigid, natural or synthetic material, underlying said gel layer ~~(4)~~.

5. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer ~~(4)~~ is finished at least on said upper surface ~~(5)~~ with a varnish which is capable of reducing tackiness between said rear portion ~~(3)~~ and the heel.

6. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer ~~(4)~~ has a raised peripheral edge ~~(4)~~ to conform to the heel anatomy and favor retention thereof.

7. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said front portion ~~(2)~~ comprises at least one layer of transpiring material.

8. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim 4, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said semi-rigid support base ~~(7)~~ continuously extends even at said front portion ~~(2)~~.

9. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in ~~claims 7 and claim~~ claim 8, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said front portion comprises at least one layer of transpiring material, and said support base ~~(7)~~ extends under said transpiring layer at said front portion ~~(2)~~.

10. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer ~~(4)~~ is joined to said front portion ~~(2)~~ by a substantially continuous connecting portion ~~(8)~~.

11. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said rear portion ~~(3)~~ has a one-piece appendage extending toward the plantar arch of the foot.

12. (Currently amended) Insole as claimed in claim ~~[[2]]1~~, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said front portion ~~(2)~~ comprises a gel insert ~~(10)~~ placed at the metatarsal region.

13. (Currently amended) A method of manufacturing a footwear insole ~~as claimed in one or more of the preceding claims~~, comprising the steps of forming a front portion ~~(2)~~ designed to interact with the foot at the metatarsal region and partly at the plantar arch, ~~and~~ forming a rear portion ~~(3)~~, integral with the front portion ~~(2)~~, and designed to interact with the heel, ~~characterized in that it comprises the step of~~ forming a gel layer ~~(4)~~, and molding it in a special mold, substantially over the whole plan size of said rear portion ~~(3)~~ and less than the plan size of the entire insole, wherein said rear portion is made of one piece and is made to have said upper surface visible from the outside.

14. (Currently amended) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer (4) is co-molded with said front portion (2).

15. (Currently amended) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer (4) is co-molded with said front portion (2) and a semi-rigid support base (7).

16. (Currently amended) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the front portion (2) and the rear portion (3) are fabricated separately and are later joined by a substantially continuous connecting junction.

17. (Currently amended) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said gel layer (4) is coated at an upper surface (5) thereof with a varnish which is capable of reducing its tackiness to the heel.

18. (Currently amended) Method as claimed in claim 13, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ a non-stick varnish is previously applied on said mold for coating an upper surface (5) of the gel layer (4) to reduce its tackiness to the heel.